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ABSTRACT

This booklet, one of a series featuring the Canadian provinces, presents a brief overview of Manitoba and is suitable for teacher reference or student reading. Separate sections discuss agriculture, mining, energy, transportation and communication, fishing, forestry, fur trapping, health and social services, education, and political life. Specific topics include the province's varied topography, population distribution, early occupation by the Intuit and Metis Indians, and colonization by European fur traders. The economic importance of manufacturing, service trades, city construction, agriculture and dairy production, nickel and petroleum production, hydroelectric power, transcontinental railways, broadcasting and telephone networks, fishing, forestry, and the fur industry is emphasized. Governmental support for free medical care, public and higher education, and recreational parks is noted. The final section traces Manitoba's political life and describes the main political parties. In addition, a simple map showing Canada's major cities and provinces is provided. (LH)

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Manitoba

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Though Manitoba is one of Canada's three prairie provinces, it has a remarkably varied topography: more than a hundred thousand lakes, covering an area of 101,592 km^2; forests covering 257,000 km^2, and a 650-km coastline along Hudson Bay, complete with a salt-water port that handles ocean-going traffic. It is the country's sixth-largest province in area. From north to south it extends 1,225 km and stretches 793 km at its widest point.

More than a million people live in the province, but there are, on average, fewer than two Manitobans for every square kilometre of land. Most of the population is concentrated in the south, near the United States border. It is here that Manitoba's largest city, Winnipeg, is located. Winnipeg, the provincial capital, has a population of 580,000 and is Canada's fifth-largest city.

Landforms have greatly influenced the economic activities undertaken in the province. In the north, trappers and loggers search for game and reap the harvest of the forests. Whole communities have been constructed to harness the power of fast-flowing rivers that drain into Hudson Bay. Miners and prospectors work the minerals found in large quantities in the northern part of Manitoba. In the south, farmers, merchants, businessmen, labourers, engineers and other professionals perform the same services and trades that are carried on in Canada's nine other provinces.

The land

Much of Manitoba is situated on what was once an immense glacial lake. The province's three largest lakes — Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis — are the greatest remaining sections of the ancient Lake Agassiz. As the level of the lake dropped, many beaches, which can still be seen today, were exposed. Below the surface of the topsoil, further reminders of the Ice Age can be found.

The flat land that surrounds Winnipeg is not typical of Manitoba. There are many valleys, plateaus and even several mountains in the southwestern part of the province. Most areas are cut by rivers — rivers such as the Red, Assiniboine and Souris that drain southern Manitoba, and the Nelson, Saskatchewan and Churchill in the north that supply hydro-electric power for the province. The northern areas are especially rugged. Farther north still is the Arctic tundra with its permafrost, permanently frozen earth, just a metre or so under the topsoil.

The soil itself ranges from the famous Manitoba black gumbo (which is just as sticky as the word "gumbo" suggests) of the Red River Valley to the light sandy soil varieties of the southeast.

Call them Manitobans

Canada's multicultural mosaic is fully reflected in the composition of Manitoba's population. From the era of

early Scottish settlement and the years of the massive European (and Eastern Canadian) influx before World War I to the present day, the province has attracted settlers and immigrants from around the world. Drawn here at first by the rich farm land and later by city jobs, these hard-working newcomers populated and developed the province.

Manitoba is cosmopolitan. British, French, Germans, Ukrainians, Indians and Inuit, *Métis,* Poles, Dutch, Scandinavians and Italians are among the main ethnic groups.

Over half the population lives in the city of Winnipeg and most of the remainder inhabits other cities, towns and villages. All in all more than 70 per cent of the people are in urban centres. This is quite a change from the earliest days when the bulk of the population was rural. But the rural-urban shift didn't happen suddenly. Its roots can be traced back to the turn of the century.

History

The first Manitobans were Indians and, much later, the Inuit. Indians have lived in the province for some 12,000 years and used tools of stone and copper. Their livelihood was dependent upon the hunting of bison, moose and caribou. Their diet was, however, supplemented by the fish that stocked the lakes and rivers. Traces of these ancient civilizations have been found in the pottery and other artifacts left by the woodland Indians and the red and orange designs on rocks and cliffs in certain areas of the province. In southeastern Manitoba, they arranged boulders in various geometrical shapes to portray the rising of the sun and moon.

Today, there are more than 45,000 Indians living either in urban centres or on reserves scattered around the province. Some rely on the land for their livelihood, and others are employed in fishing, mining exploration, logging, service and manufacturing industries.

The Inuit appeared in Manitoba approximately 3,500 years ago and small numbers can still be found in the most northern section of the province and in communities along Hudson Bay.

Captain Thomas Button was the first European to set foot in Manitoba. This was in 1612. Button landed at what now is Port Nelson on Hudson Bay and spent the winter there.

Europeans were lured to Manitoba by the possibility of harvesting the great cash crop of the northwest — furs. For almost 200 years it provided the region's main economic activity. But in those days Manitoba was not a province. In 1670 Charles II of England gave the Hudson's Bay Company sovereignty over Rupert's Land, an area which included all of present-day Manitoba. In effect, the company governed the area through the forts and posts it built. Colonization was not

encouraged, but the fur trade certainly was. Scores of canoes plied the rivers throughout the territory.

In their quest for fur-bearing animals, however, the fur traders opened up much of Rupert's Land and paved the way for the settlers who eventually followed. Indeed, the origins of many of Manitoba's communities can be traced back to the forts established by the two fur-trading organizations, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company based in Montreal.

Competition for furs was fierce. Rivalry between the two firms became so bitter that they decided to merge rather than risk further bloodshed. Consequently, a "new" Hudson's Bay Company was organized in 1821.

As more and more men were recruited to trade for furs with the Indians and to transport skins to market, the operation began to require vast quantities of food-stuffs. Until the early nineteenth century, provisions had to be shipped by water from eastern Canada or from England. But in 1812, settlement was allowed in the southern parts of Manitoba. Lord Selkirk, who obtained a tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company, brought many of his Scottish crofters to the Red River district where they grew garden crops and grain to feed the fur traders. The harsh winters and floods were the worst of many natural hardships that the settlers had to endure. If frosts and flood waters did not ruin the crops, grasshoppers could be counted on to attack them.

The Indians and especially the *Métis* people (of mixed Indian and European blood) of the Red River Valley became alarmed when settlers started to trickle into the area. Indeed, until the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company the colony periodically found itself caught up in the fur trade war. The most notorious example occurred in 1816 when Governor Robert Semple and 19 colonists died in a clash with the *Métis,* afterwards called the Seven Oaks massacre.

Until the 1840s the Red River Colony grew at its own pace. Owing to the scarcity of new colonists, it was a slow pace. With the opening up of the American West, the colony was presented with new problems and new opportunities.

As the years passed, settlers came from the south and east rather than from the north. With the influx of people from Ontario into the Red River Colony in the 1860s, a struggle between old and new emerged. The *Métis* feared the buffalo would be exterminated, while the old settlers were concerned that they would be swept

up by the tide of new arrivals. Then they would have little voice in the debate that would determine how and when the colony proposed to join the Dominion of Canada. Indeed, when the Hudson's Bay Company was on the point of relinquishing control of its territorial holdings, a rebellion broke out. Before sovereignty could be transferred to the Canadian Parliament, a provisional government under Louis Riel, a popular *Métis* leader, was formed. The rebellion was symptomatic of the emotional climate in the colony.

On July 15, 1870, Manitoba officially became a province of Canada.

With improving economic conditions, an increase in the price of wheat and the completion of the trans-Canada railway which united British Columbia on the Pacific coast with the Maritime provinces along the Atlantic Ocean, the population of Manitoba grew rapidly. The fertile lands of Manitoba's river valleys attracted immigrant farmers like a magnet. Extension of the province's boundaries, first in 1881 and again in 1912, gave the province its final shape.

The economy

Manitoba's economy today is buoyant and diversified. It encompasses a wide range of activities from farming to aerospace. With a gross domestic product of almost $9.5 billion and 460,000 employed workers, the province is enjoying a period of moderate prosperity.

Manitoba is not one of Canada's richest provinces. It does, however, have a well-educated, expanding labour force and growing agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors.

The service sector is the largest area of employment for Manitobans. Approximately 125,000 people, 30 per cent of the labour force, are employed in community, business and service trades. The second largest employer is the wholesale and retail trade. Manufacturing and transportation rank third and fourth respectively. Agriculture stands fifth.

Among goods-producing industries, manufacturing is the most important activity in terms of dollar value. Factory shipments were worth about $3.4 billion in 1978, double the value of the second-place construction sector. There was some $1.5 billion worth of construction in the province during 1978. Agriculture and mining were third and fourth in 1978 with gross productions of $1.2 billion and $550 million.

Manufacturing

The largest single segment of the Manitoba economy is manufacturing. Food and beverage shipments of $1.1

billion comprise about a third of total factory production. Next in order of importance are fabricated metals, valued at nearly $250 million, and the machinery, transportation-equipment and clothing industries, all with shipments amounting to some $200 million each year. Other important money earners include printing and publishing, primary metals, non-metallic minerals and chemical products.

The biggest industry is livestock slaughtering and meat packing. There are more than a dozen large- and medium-scale plants scattered around the province, with the majority located in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg is a hub for the refurbishing and maintenance of railway rolling stock. Semi-automated wheels and axles and rail switch components are manufactured in Winnipeg for use across Canada.

Other manufacturing activities include electrical products, furniture and fixtures, wood, leather and knitting mills.

Manitoban industries are very competitive. For example, the garment manufacturers can compete with clothing imports from East Asia. In fact, at a time when western textile facilities are in difficulty, Manitoba plants are hiring more people and expanding plant size.

With the ever-growing prosperity of the prairie provinces, Manitoba manufacturers have found it profitable to cultivate markets in Saskatchewan and Alberta. And partly owing to the competitive level of the Canadian dollar in world money markets, Manitoba's goods have reclaimed a portion of the prairie market from foreign imports. This increase in demand for Manitoban products has been an incentive for companies to expand their capacity.

The Black Brant rocket, used by Canada's National Research Council and other scientific research organizations, was designed and built in Winnipeg. Production of the rocket is continuing.

The service sector

Service trades — those businesses that supply the province's residents with basic necessities such as food, transport, newspapers and household goods — are next in importance after those industries based on agricultural resources.

Services have traditionally been high-growth areas of the Manitoban economy. Hotels, restaurants, laundries, movie theatres, computer services, advertising, engineering, finance and business management and personnel services have benefited from increased capital investment in the service sector.

Construction
Some $400 million is spent each year in Manitoba on new construction. About three-quarters of this is carried out in the city of Winnipeg.

Two out of every three dollars' worth of construction in 1978 went towards housing Manitobans.

Agriculture
Agriculture is particularly important to Manitoba's economy. Manitoba farmers are known for their impressive volume of grain deliveries. There are approximately 30,000 farms in the province and most produce grain crops. In addition to wheat and other cereals (oats, barley, rye), farmers have emphasized the cultivation of specialty crops such as sugar beets and sunflower seeds. Since the agricultural sector is healthy, this has meant better returns for Manitoba's large manufacturing and retail industries.

The average farm is 245 hectares in size and farmers have recently been receiving excellent world prices for their produce. Net farm income increased by 35 per cent in 1978 and cash receipts were valued at more than $1.1 billion.

Dairy farming produces enough to meet domestic needs and some of the province's butter and cheese is exported. The raising of beef cattle is widely carried out.

While the number of farms in Manitoba has decreased in recent years, individual farm size has increased considerably. These economies of scale have led to greater efficiency. And so too has the amount of money which has been spent on agricultural research and development.

There are three major agricultural research facilities in Manitoba. They are located near the cities of Brandon and Morden and on the University of Manitoba campus, near Winnipeg. Their main fields of study are beef cattle breeding and management, swine breeding, forage crop physiology, agronomic practice, weed control, cereal and field crop development, insect and pest control, and soil-climate factors.

Mining
At a time when the presence of mineral resources is a key factor in determining economic strength and security, Manitoba is indeed fortunate to possess significant quantities of minerals. It is similarly blessed with vast tracts of forested land and marine resources.

Nickel, zinc, copper, cadmium, gold, silver selenium, tellurium and other minerals are mined in the province. But activity is not confined to the mines or pits. A considerable amount of smelting and refining is carried out in the province. Minerals are turned into concentrates for export or further processing in Canada.

Nickel accounts for 65 per cent of Manitoba's metal production (or 50 per cent of mineral production) and more than 50,000 tonnes of nickel are extracted annually. Copper and zinc total another 32 per cent of metal production (or 25 per cent of mineral production).

The International Nickel Company's facility in Thompson was the western world's first fully integrated mining, concentrating, smelting and refining complex for nickel. Much of the province's mineral production is processed either at Thomson or Flin Flon, but quantities are shipped by rail to British Columbia and Quebec.

Not all of the petroleum found on the prairies is in Alberta or Saskatchewan. Annual crude oil production in Manitoba is approximately four million barrels. This oil is located in the southwestern parts of the province around the town of Virden. The petroleum products industry operates one oil refinery in Winnipeg. A large proportion of Manitoba's motor vehicles and farm machines are fuelled by the gasoline and oil refined at this plant, although at least half of the province's gasoline and refined oil comes from Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Considerable mining research and development is done by the mining companies themselves and by the provincial and federal governments and the University of Manitoba. This research provides the scientific and technical data needed to discover further mineral deposits and helps evaluate the known and potential resources of the province.

Other important items include those resources used for building and construction. Portland cement is made from limestone and there are a number of granite, tyndall stone, gypsum, shale, and stoneware clay quarries throughout the province.

The world's largest known reserves of cesium ore are found in the pegmatite of the Bernic Lake region.

Power

Manitoba is rich in energy resources. Some 95 per cent of the province's electricity is generated by water power. While most of the hydroelectric power is produced in the northern part of the province, a considerable amount is generated on the Winnipeg River near the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba's greatest energy user.

Total generating capacity is about 3.7 million kilowatts and most (3.5 million kilowatts) is owned by Manitoba Hydro, a provincial Crown corporation.

The largest of the province's 13 hydroelectric stations are some 400 to 750 km north of Winnipeg on the Saskatchewan River at Grand Rapids

and on the Nelson River at Jenpeg, Kelsey, Kettle and Long Source. The Kelsey plant serves the INCO nickel facility at Thompson.

In northern Manitoba there are a number of potential sites for hydro-electric power stations. Their ultimate development will depend on increases in demand for electricity.

Approximately 65,000 km of transmission and distribution lines carry power to more than 800 Manitoban communities. The province's power grid is also connected to those in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario and in the United States.

Transportation and communications

In the early days of the Red River Colony, settlers and fur traders relied on the rivers and lakes for transportation. In time, a sophisticated communications system was developed. Today, there are nearly 12,000 km of highways in Manitoba and the province is served by more than three dozen commercial air carriers.

But the backbone of the province's transportation system remains the railway. Both of Canada's transcontinental railways, Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP), have extensive holdings in Manitoba. They have a combined total of more than 7,800 km of main and branch-line track and do major repair work on railway engines and passenger and freight cars.

Winnipeg is the major shipping and redistribution centre for goods coming into or leaving western Canada by rail. Its freight yards are among the most modern of their kind in the world. CN and CP not only provide the province with a vital transportation service, but inject hundreds of millions of dollars into the Manitoba economy every year.

Manitoba's port at Churchill on Hudson Bay handles 20 million bushels of grain exports every year. This grain is shipped to Europe during the ice-free months of August, September and October.

There are numerous broadcasting concerns in the province: six television stations, 30 rebroadcasting stations and three cable stations. These are joined by the services provided by 25 AM and FM radio stations and some 35 relay stations scattered around the province. Many of these rebroadcasting and relay stations are located in the north.

There are more than 650,000 telephones in Manitoba and Manitobans make 1.3 billion local telephone calls and approximately 45 million long-distance calls annually. The Manitoba Telephone System is publicly owned.

Three microwave radio networks link northern with southern Manitoba and bring television, radio and long-distance services to northern communities.

Fish, forests and furs

Lakes, rivers and streams cover 16 per cent of the province's area and forested lands make up 40 per cent.

Each year nine million kilograms of fish are taken from Manitoba waters by commercial fishermen. Nearly 60 per cent of the catch comes from Lakes Winnipeg, Winnipegosis and Manitoba, with Lake Winnipeg by far the principle source. The main commercial species are whitefish, sauger, pike and walleye.

Most of the commercial fish harvest is exported to the United States. The provincial government has taken an active part in fisheries management and fish culture. There are a number of walleye and trout hatcheries and the province has an ambitious lake restocking program.

Three out of every four hectares of land in Manitoba are publicly owned. Thus the province, through its control of these crown lands, manages most of Manitoba's productive (114,000 km^2), potentially productive (18,000 km^2) and non-productive (125,000 km^2) forest areas.

The total sales value of all related wood-using industries in 1978 was estimated at $338.6 million. Much of the pulpwood production is manufactured into newsprint, kraft paper and construction materials within the province. The most common tree species include black and white spruce, jack pine, aspen, tamarack, white birch, balsam fir, cedar and balsam poplar. Oak, elm, ash, basswood, maple and cottonwood trees are found in certain regions of the province.

More than 60 per cent of the annual harvest is manufactured into pulpwood and nearly 35 per cent is converted into lumber. The remainder is made into railway ties, telephone and hydro poles or is used in mines or as firewood.

The provincial government annually reforests between five and six thousand hectares of crown land and operates a large forest nursery near the community of Hadashville in southeastern Manitoba.

There is abundant wildlife in Manitoba. The fur trade sparked the opening of the Canadian west to European settlement. While this is no longer a major economic activity, fur remains an important natural resource.

Manitoba has 180 fur farms where mink and fox are raised commercially. Aside from the fur farmers and workers in Winnipeg tanneries, many native Indians depend on trapping for at least part of their annual income.

The provincial government plays an active role in the conservation and

management of wild-fur supply. By controlling river flow, reclaiming marsh lands and instituting a system of registered trap lines, the government has preserved valuable wildlife habitats for the use and benefit of all Manitobans.

There are some 47 wildlife management areas in the province which cover 27,506 km^2.

Health and social services

Most hospital and medical care provided to Manitoba residents is free of charge. The province similarly pays a sizeable part of the bill for most prescribed drugs used by Manitobans. Other services include child welfare, public health nursing, day care, home care, income maintenance, correction services and alcohol and drug rehabilitation.

Education

Manitoba's three universities (two in Winnipeg, one in Brandon) have a full-time enrolment of 18,000. In addition, there are three community colleges in the province which offer specialized career and occupational programs in a wide variety of fields. Approximately 215,000 students are registered in primary and secondary schools.

Tourism and recreation

Tourism is a big industry in Manitoba. Each year visitors and travelling Manitobans spend $120 million while holidaying in the province. The camping grounds, parks, lakes and rivers and historic sites are the principal attractions. Especially noteworthy is the International Peace Garden located along Manitoba's boundary with the United States. Riding Mountain National Park, administered by the Federal Government, has modern resorts, nature reserves and hiking areas. It even has a herd of bison.

Manitoba's provincially operated natural, recreational and wayside parks have at least five million visitors each year. Some 13,200 km^2 of land in the province has been set aside as park land.

Political life

The Manitoba Act, which brought Manitoba into Confederation in 1870, provided the province with two legislative houses. Six years later this system ended and ever since, the province has had a single-chamber, elected legislature. There are 57 members sitting in the legislature.

The first political party to form a government was the Conservative party, elected in December 1899 and taking office in January 1900. The province has seldom been without at least three political parties since World War I.

A succession of parties flourished in Manitoba, some of which have since passed into oblivion. They were the United Farmers, the Liberal-Progressives, Social Credit and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (the CCF — predecessor of the New Democratic Party).

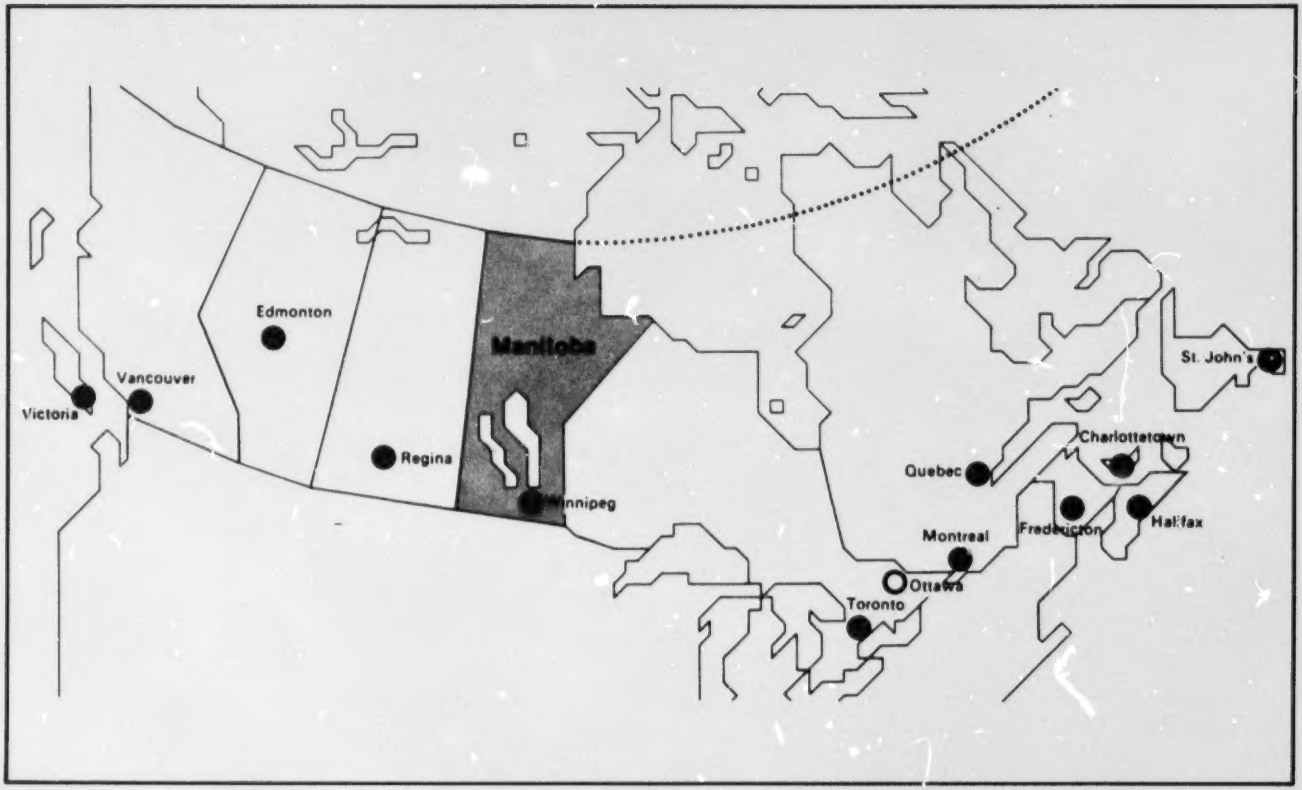
Today, the main political parties in Manitoba are the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party.

At times there has been bitter political debate. The "Manitoba School Question" concerning publicly financed denominational education in the 1890s is one example.

Conclusion

From its beginning as the "postage stamp province" in 1870, Manitoba has grown at a varying rate. It now is eight times its original size and since the earliest days of the dominance of the fur trade, it has developed a diversified economic base.

The diversification of the province's economy, its successful mixture of primary and secondary industries and the strength and determination of its people have been keys to Manitoba's steady development. These will also be the main factors influencing Manitoba's future progress.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